

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 7448

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, ENRG, VE, PINR
SUBJECT: NEW FOREIGN MINISTER CONSALVI DISCUSSES VENEZUELAN
FOREIGN POLICY-THE THIRD WORLD REVIEW

SUMMARY. IN HIS FIRST MAJOR INTERVIEW AS FOREIGN MINISTER, SIMON ALBERTO CONSALVI DEFENDED VENEZUELA'S FOREIGN POLICY, A POLICY WHICH HAS PUT VENEZUELA ON THE INTERNATIONAL MAP, AND MADE HER AN ACTIVE AND POWERFUL DEFENDER OF THE NIEO, AND THE THIRD WORLD, PRINCIPALLY BECAUSE OF THE EXISTENCE OF OPEC. CONSALVI ALSO PRAISED PEREZ' HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY AND EFFORTS AT NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION, BUT MAJOR THRUST OF SPEECH WAS TILTED TOWARD THIRD WORLD SHIBBOLETHS. SUBSTANCE OF PRESENTATION INDICATES THAT CONSALVI, IN CONTRAST TO LOW-KEY PREDECESSOR ESCOVAR SALOM, WILL PRESS THIRD WORLD ISSUES. TONE OF PRESENTATION, IN FACT, ECHOED CLOSELY PRESIDENT PEREZ' MORE STRIDENT THIRD WORLD PRONOUNCEMENTS. END SUMMARY.

1. THE SUNDAY, JULY 24TH EDITION OF EL NACIONAL CARRIED THE FIRST MAJOR INTERVIEW GIVEN BY RECENTLY NAMED FOREIGN MINISTER SIMON ALBERTO CONSALVI. CONSALVI, WHO HAS JUST FINISHED THREE YEARS AS VENEZUELA'S AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED NATIONS, PORTRAYED HIMSELF AS ONE OF THE DESIGNERS
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OF PRESENT GOV FOREIGN POLICY, WHICH HE SAID WAS BASED ON VENEZUELA'S INDEPENDENCE, AND ROLE AS AN ACTIVE AND UNDER-
STANDING ADVOCATE FOR THE NIEO.

2. CONSALVI SAID THAT VENEZUELA'S STRONG POSITION WITHIN THIRD WORLD COUNCILS IS BASED ON ITS MEMBERSHIP IN OPEC, WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS AN "IRREVERSIBLE PHENOMENON ON

THE WORLD SCENE," AND "AN INSTRUMENT OF REDEMPTION." ONLY THE EXISTENCE OF OPEC HAD MADE POSSIBLE THE CURRENT NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE.

3. TURNING FROM THE NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE, CONSALVI ALSO STRONGLY SUPPORTED NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION, CALLING FOR THE WEALTHY NATIONS TO DIVERT EXPENDITURES AWAY FROM WASTEFUL WEAPONS PURCHASES AND TOWARD ASSISTING THE LDCS. HE CITED THE EXISTENCE OF TRANSITIONAL CORPORATIONS AS THE BASIC REASON FOR THE ARMS RACE, CORPORATIONS WHICH PLUNDER THE WEALTH OF THE THIRD WORLD WHILE THEY DEDICATE THEMSELVES TO THE MANUFACTURE OF STRATEGIC AND CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS.

4. CONSALVI DEFENDED PRESIDENT PEREZ' WORLD TRAVELS, TRAVELS WHICH HAVE GAINED FOR VENEZUELA A ROLE AS A MAJOR SPOKESMAN FOR THE THIRD WORLD. HE ALSO MENTIONED VENEZUELAN SUPPORT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, NOTING THAT SUCH A POLICY IS NOT INCONSISTENT WITH THE TRADITIONAL DOCTRINE OF NON-INTERVENTION, SINCE SUPPORT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IS CONTAINED IN THE UN DECLARATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS WHICH APPLIES TO ALL NATIONS. CONSALVI CLOSED BY SAYING THAT, IN FACT, HUMAN RIGHTS ARE AS ESSENTIAL TO THE THIRD WORLD AS THEIR "DAILY BREAD."

5. COMMENT: CONSALVI SAID LITTLE NEW, BUT THE TONE OF HIS REMARKS, WITH ITS RHETORIC EMPHASIS ON NORTH-SOUTH THEMES, IS IN SHARP CONTRAST TO THE LOW-KEY STATEMENTS BY HIS
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PREDECESSOR, ESCOVAR SALOM. CONSALVI HAS A REPUTATION AS A HARD-LINE NATIONALIST, AND HIS STATEMENTS DID NOTHING TO DISPEL THAT VIEW. HIS IDEOLOGICAL BETE NOIRE IS THE TRANSNATIONAL CORPORATION WHICH HE LAMBASTED AS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ARMS RACE AND FOR THE FAILURE OF THE LOS NEGOTIATIONS (SEE CARACAS 7417). IN ESSENCE, CONSALVI CLOSELY ECHOED PRESIDENT PEREZ' THIRD WORLD PRESENTATIONS AT THEIR MOST STRIDENT. GIVEN HIS INTELLIGENCE, AND FORCEFUL PERSONALITY, THE EMBASSY CONJECTURES THAT CONSALVI WILL HAVE SUBSTANTIALLY MORE WEIGHT IN GOV FOREIGN POLICY COUNCILS THAN ESCOVAR. IN FACT, MINISTER OF STATE FOR INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AFFAIRS PEREZ GUERRERO, WHO TO DATE HAS BASICALLY CARRIED THE HEAVY FREIGHT ON NORTH-SOUTH ISSUES MAY FIND THE NEW FOREIGN MINISTER WILLING AND ABLE TO PUT HIS TWO CENTS INTO THAT PARTICULAR POT.
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